

Iconic Turn of the Century Posters at the Figge

Written by Susan Horan

Wednesday, 31 August 2011 08:52

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Davenport, Iowa - August 2011 – On Saturday, September 3, an exhibition of original nineteenth century posters from the Krannert Art Museum will open at the Figge Art Museum. The exhibition highlights original posters by artists including Pierre Bonnard, Alphonse Mucha, Jan Toorop, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and illustrates how artists utilized lithography for different purposes and with varying regional stylistic characteristics.

In the late nineteenth century, the rise of color lithography along with an increasing demand for advertisements presented artists with an alternative space to exhibit their artworks. Mass-produced posters ranged from large-scale ads for consumer products such as lamp oil and bicycles, to promotional materials for cabaret performances at the Moulin Rouge or the Divan Japonais. Artists were also sought after to create intimate, small-scale prints for literary journals, playbills, and exhibition announcements, enabling their art and reputations to reach an ever-broadening audience.

The Figge will host a number of events in conjunction with this exhibition. On Wednesday, September 7, Figge docents will lead an Art Lovers Book Club discussion at 1pm in the Figge's Arts Café. The club will discuss *Toulouse-Lautrec: Scenes of the Night* by Claire Freches-Throy and Jose Freches; this compassionate narrative is combined with reminiscences of the artist's friends to vividly evoke Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's tragic, bohemian life.

A public reception for the exhibition will be held on Thursday, September 8 at 6pm. A cocktail reception will begin at 6pm and at 7pm Kathryn Koca Polite, the exhibition curator from the Krannert Art Museum, will lead a talk that will explain how posters reflect changes in society and

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how the new technical developments in lithography inspired painters to use the largely commercial medium for artistic purposes. Following the talk, Joseph Lappie and Allison Filley from St. Ambrose University will introduce lithography, and provide an opportunity to draw on lithographic stones and plates.

On Thursday, September 15 at 7pm Dr Dorothy Johnson will offer the art talk “Entertaining Visions: Toulouse-Lautrec and Fin-de-Siècle Paris”. This talk will explore the fascinating career of Toulouse-Lautrec with particular emphasis on his engagement with the entertainment culture of Montmartre in fin-de-siècle Paris. On September 22, Zaiga Thorson will lead a gallery talk at 7pm that will highlight elements of good design demonstrated in the exhibition.

Families are invited to a Free Family Event on October 1 from 1-4pm to celebrate the exhibition with studio art activities, stories, refreshments and more. This event is sponsored by John Deere and Butler Insurance Services.

This exhibition and its programs are supported, in part, by Humanities Iowa and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The views and opinions expressed by this program do not necessarily reflect those of Humanities Iowa or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Turn of the Century Posters from the Krannert Art Museum Collection is curated by Kathryn Koca Polite, organized by Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and sponsored in part by Illinois Arts Council, a State Agency; Krannert Art Museum Director’s Circle; and Krannert Art Museum Council.

The Figge Art Museum is located on the riverfront in Downtown Davenport at 225 West Second Street. Hours are from 10 am to 5 pm, Tuesday through Saturday, Sundays noon to 5pm and Thursdays 10 am to 9pm. To contact the museum, please call [563.326.7804](tel:563.326.7804) , or visit www.figgeartmuseum.org

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